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Richard Austin
POINT
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Dear Richard:

In this letter I want to describe the birth control work that I and my colleagues are engaged in--our motivation, what we've accomplished so far, and our hopes and plans. Of course, you and I have talked about this before, but because things have now developed to the POINT where we need some financial help, this letter takes the form of an appeal for support. Consequently, I'd better present the full picture, which you can distribute to the other Directors, as you see fit.

To summarize, we are attempting to validate and refine a method of contraceptionless birth control developed during the last twenty years by a Czech psychiatrist, Dr. Eugen Jonas, and a Hungarian doctor, Dr. Kurt Rechnitz. After many discouraging months of work we are finally getting some results that are significant. Our plan is to complete a pilot study aimed at making a small but sufficiently solid case for the Jonas-Rechnitz theory that we can go after some public health money next--the $60,000 to $80,000 it will take to determine the limitsof the method and to convince the M.D.s and the public.

My interest in Dr. Jonas' work stems from a brief contact several years ago with Ralph Metzner, who mentioned Jonas' claims and his reported results with several thousand cases. These claims are: I. A woman is fertile for an interval of two days per month, where the end of the interval occurs when the phase of the moon is the same as it was when she was born. II. The sex of the child is determined by the celestial longitude of the moon at the time of conception. III. The viability of the embryo or infant is determined by certain sun, moon, and planetary configurations at the time of conception. These claims were later modified by Rechnitz to include in I. the normal ovulation cycle, and by a Dr. Barna Balogh of Hungary to include in II. a supposedly more accurate formula using the father's birth time as well as the mother's.

At first glance this surely appears as the worst of Sunday-Supplement astrology. Looking deeper, however, one finds that (a) it is well known in biology that many animals have sex cycles with a synodic lunar period (29.53 days); (b) other animals,

such as cats, ovulate only during intercourse (that is, the egg is released during copulation), which suggests that some such process might also be operative in humans; and, most important, (c) medical knowledge about the mechanism of human conception is very scanty--the Knaus-Ogino theory of the menstrual cycle is still very much of a theory, and has never been adequately tested; also, this theory does not account for much that goes on in normal women, and the "rhythm method" of birth control which is based upon it does not work well at all--80 to 85% effective on the average, and apparently much worse for certain women. I was led to the conclusion that, whether the Jonas-Rechnitz theory was correct or not, it was at least consistent with the observations upon which the Knaus-Ogino theory was based. Thus, both theories could be correct so long as neither was interpreted as providing the entire explanation.

After some difficulty, I obtained some of the documents written by the East-European principals in the case, & talked with four individuals who had discussed the results with Jonas himself. His work had been authenticated by numerous Czech and Hungarian doctors, but the raw data was not available. Jonas' special clinic was closed and Jonas himself deposed when the Soviets moved into Czechoslovakia. So we had nothing from Europe but claims--no evidence at all.

Nevertheless, it was eminently clear that, even if we had obtained volumes of evidence, the theory would still need to be independantly checked and validated for U.S. women, or the U.S. medical profession would never accept it. I was motivated to attempt such a validation for three reasons. First, if the Jonas-Rechnitz theory could be shown to be valid, it would imply a method of birth control that would very likely be acceptable world-wide, since it would be fairly simple to use and would offend neither church nor medical practice. Second, while solid evidence was lacking, the case for validity of the theory seemed pretty convincing, at least if some small modifications were allowed. Third, I felt sure that the theory would not receive due consideration by established scientific bodies in the U.S., because of its connection with astrology.

I am fairly confident that a grant can be obtained from NIH, Planned Parenthood, or the Family Planning Council for a full-scale study of the Jonas-Rechnitz theory, if only we can demonstate its plausibility in a small pilot study.* Even my staid employer, Stanford Research Institute, might be willing to undertake such a project if the results of the pilot study were sufficiently strong.

With this in mind, three of us embarked late last year on the pilot study: Robert Kimball, Mary Beard, and myself. This was done on our own time and expense, which has been considerable, even with the assistance of Bob's wife Sherri and a crew of volunteers. Bob was supported by disability payments from a minor accident for most of this period, but has elected to

*I am told that grant money for birth-control research is going begging, for lack of good proposals.

continue with this project rather than to return to his regular job. It is mainly his subsistence that we are seeking support for, in making this appeal to POINT. While Mary and I are involved only a day per week or so, Bob is working full time plus, and needs this support if he is to maintain momentum and bring this pilot study to a successful conclusion. Also, there's some urgency, since our chances of obtaining a grant may decrease as time goes by; this is because of bad publicity which may ensue from two money-making ventures that are underway. One is a sex selection and fertility "kit" that is being marketed by a publishing house next year, and the other is a widely distributed pamphlet entitled "Natural Birth Control," put out by the Aquarian Research Foundation. We have good reason to believe, as a result of our own work, that the "method" being offered by these two publications is not correct, and will give the whole subject a bad name.

Finally, let me outline the work we are carrying out. We are seeking to generate evidence in support of all three of the modified Jonas-Rechnitz claims. Claim I, while most important for birth control, is the hardest to substantiate directly, because of the difficulty of gathering data on births where the woman knows the time of conception fairly accurately because of an isolated instance of intercourse (rather than from information regarding her menstrual cycle). Claim II is easiest, and we now have a method of sex determination that works pretty well, applied both to pregnant women who want a prediction and to women who have already given birth. Claim III is harder, but the procedure is straightforward; we are using statistical techniques to verify the presence of certain telltale configurations in the horoscopes of 150 stillborn children, about 150 children who died shortly after birth, and hopefully some miscarriages as well, in comparison with 150 normal children. The tentative results are encouraging. In addition to these three tasks, we also undertook to look for a 5-day periodicity in the sex ratio among normal births. It turns out that such a periodicity would constitute a partial substantiation of Claims I and II, if it could be detected, although it may not be strong enough to show up in the amount of data that can reasonably be collected.

All four of these tasks are still in progress, and will be continued in the coming months. For those that are most successful, we will need to gather more data from additional cases, in order to solidify the conclusions which we hope to draw from the investigation. Also, if possible, I would like to include a fifth task, on the sex ratio in fraternal twins, since Claim II implies that like-sexed fraternal twins should be significantly more common than unlike-sexed fraternal twins. The data we need to check this is probably available somewhere, but has not been published, so far as can be determined readily.

Incidently, I have made extensive checks all over the U.S. and Europe and have found no other research group, astrological or

otherwise, that is working on the problem of refining or validating the Jonas-Rechnitz theory. So, the chances of duplication are very small.

The funds we need to carry out the proposed work are as follows:

"Salary" for Robert Kimball, 10 months @ $250. per month	$2500.
Material supplies	50.
Communication and transportation and mailing	150.
Computer rental, 400 horoscopes @ 25¢ each	100.
Total	$2800.

The third item arises from the fact that Bob and Mary are based in Santa Rosa, and I am in Palo Alto; also, we need to travel to San Francisco and Sacramento to get some of our data. (The rest comes through questionaires and from members of Mary's Natural Childbirth Class.) The fourth item is a token payment to my employer, Stanford Research Institute, to allow me to use the computer for this project without having to ask them to endorse the project as a whole. If necessary, we could rent the computer time elsewhere, since the program is mine personally.

Well, this is a long-winded proposal, but I think I have covered everything that is relevant except the qualifications of the three people involved. I think I'd like to handle that one through personal contacts, if possible and agreeable to you and the other Directors of POINT, to the extent that our credentials are not already expressed in the work we've done so far, as reported here.

If you or the other readers of this letter have any questions, please call me directly at 326-6200, Ext. 4045, or 321-0717, or you can talk to Bob Kimball at 707-544-8541, His address is: Planetary Eugenics (the name of our little endeavor), P.O. Box 2884, Santa Rosa, CA 95405. We'll be glad to meet with you, if that's needed.

Peace, Richard, and wisdom, too--

Bill

William H. Kautz

P.S. Though I didn't specifically say so above, it should be obvious that this theory, if correct, would be a big help to women who are having difficulty conceiving healthy children, or conceiving at all, as well as for ordinary birth control. It would also permit sex control, which raises some ethical questions that I'm prepared to discuss, but not here in this letter, which is already too long.